

Tendring Technology College

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 137188 |
| Local Authority | N/A |
| Inspection number | 385580 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 September 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | David Jones HMI |

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Academy |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1942 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 373 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jean Cains |
| Headteacher | Caroline Haynes (Principal) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 January 2007 |
| School address | Rochford Way Frinton-on-Sea CO13 0AZ |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 59 lessons and saw 58 staff teach. Meetings were held with the principal, nominated staff, members of the governing body and groups of students on both school sites. Inspectors observed the college's work, looked at a wide range of documentation and reviewed 336 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. A total of 153 student and 105 staff questionnaires were evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The standards and achievement secured in public examinations.
- The impact of curriculum provision on the standards attained and the progress made by all students.
- The improvements made in attendance and in the reduction secured in persistent absence in recent years
- The quality of teaching available in all year groups.

Information about the school

Tendring Technology College, an AET Academy, is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust. In the summer term 2011 the governing body of Tendring Technology College, a foundation school, sought approval from the Secretary of State for Education to convert to academy status, and approval was given on the 1 August 2011. The governing body, principal and staff of the predecessor school transferred to the new academy and a decision was taken to retain the Tendring Technology College name.

The college is more than twice the size of the average secondary school and occupies two sites that are almost five miles apart; the largest distance between secondary school sites in England. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is a quarter of the national figure, and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is low.

The proportion of students registered by the college as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below the national figure and so is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. There are a number of looked after children in each year group. The college specialism is technology and it has secured the following national accreditations: International School Award; LPPA – Leading Parent Partnership Award; the ICT mark; Geography Mark; Healthy Schools Award; and the Prince's Teaching Institute Award in science, English, history and geography.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a good school. Care, guidance and support are outstanding, and so are the leadership of the college and its capacity to improve. As a result, two of the seven prime outcome judgements are outstanding; feeling safe and the students' positive contribution to the community. All of the others, including the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Attendance is broadly average and the level of persistent absence has reduced significantly in the last two years to a position better than the national figure.

Achievement and the extent to which students enjoy their learning are good. Behaviour is good and students are mature, well-mannered individuals. Academic standards are rising rapidly and are satisfactory overall. Results in English and mathematics continue to improve but the latter remains below the national average and the subject of a great deal of work within the college. The strengths evident in the college's technology specialism, the humanities, science and increasingly in modern foreign languages have been significant factors in rising GCSE standards. Students make good progress overall and their current learning and progress is good or better in the very large majority of lessons. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the impact of well-judged intervention strategies and the students' positive attitudes to learning. Effective curriculum initiatives such as 'Number 4' where older but vulnerable students are able to maintain their core subjects and personalised curriculum in a supportive environment, have helped to reduce the numbers of former students not in education, employment or training to below the county average. The small numbers of students who represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds make good progress. Achievement and the extent to which students enjoy their learning are good.

Teaching is good overall; almost all lessons were satisfactory and more than 8 out of 10 lessons were judged to be effective. The use of assessment to enhance teaching and learning is good and conducted imaginatively in the best lessons; for example, in an outstanding AS level biology lesson, sixth form students in only the second week of their course were required to mark an AS examination paper put together from the most common misconceptions seen by the examination boards. The quality of the high intensity questioning and guidance provided by the teacher allowed the students to make outstanding progress.

The curriculum opportunities provided are good with significant breadth of provision. Well-conceived intervention strategies are provided on a personal level. The recently

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introduced 'transition' group supports vulnerable Year 7 students. Senior staff have correctly identified the need to further enhance curriculum provision to match the breadth of opportunities provided, for example, in science. This curriculum drive is focused on improving the proportion of students securing five higher grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, and enhancing the 14–19 provision to take advantage of the wonderful new sixth form facilities available.

The care, welfare and guidance provided are outstanding. Parents and carers, as well as students, are full of praise for the wide range of support available. The support provided for students in challenging circumstances is exceptional and the impact of this work can be seen in the rising attendance and the sharp decline in persistent absence. Academic guidance is a notable feature of the strongest teaching. Those students who spoke to the inspection team were very positive on the college's high expectations of individual behaviour and inspectors found behaviour to be good.

Governance is good and members of the governing body are well informed. The governing body's decision to work with the Academies Enterprise Trust resulted in a smooth transition to academy status. Self-evaluation is accurate, if a little modest in places. The leadership team has done very well to secure significant improvements in academic standards, teaching and learning, equality of provision, the sixth form, behaviour and attendance. This demonstrates the academy's outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - increasing the focus on subject specific literacy
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning available at AS level is developed at GCSE.

- Continue to develop a personalised curriculum with particular focus on extending 14–19 pathways to meet the needs of all students to:
 - raise the proportion of students securing five higher grade passes that include English and mathematics
 - ensure that attendance continues to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry has been below average for the last five years. Overall, standards have risen steadily for the last three years. The proportion of students securing five higher grade GCSE passes, 85%, is well above the national average. The 2011 provisional results show that the proportion securing five A*–C GCSE passes including English and mathematics, 56%, exceeded the national figure for the first time. The examination results secured by students known to be eligible for free school meals were similar to their peers. Students make good progress overall.

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The students’ current learning and performance in the classroom mirrors, and in some instances exceeds, the improvement shown by the most recent examination results. In the large majority of lessons, students make good progress and clearly enjoy their work. The students’ positive attitude to learning was a key factor in all lessons. Outcomes are strongest where there is a clear focus on what the students are expected to learn and students respond well to this challenge. In an outstanding Year 11 English lesson on Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’, the teacher’s skilful questioning and strong subject knowledge allowed students to make outstanding progress as they investigated the character of Lady Macbeth.

Students, parents and carers are very positive that students feel safe in school and inspectors observed very good staff/student relationships to support this view. The college provides good support for a healthy lifestyle; a wide range of school meals is available and the participation in sport is significant. Students noted that the ‘staying safe’ guidance available in assembly is particularly valuable. The students’ contribution to the college and wider community is outstanding through the extensive support provided for the homeless and senior citizens.

The students’ workplace and other skills are good overall; however, the practical skills they develop in their technology courses, evident in the furniture and textiles on display around the college, are exceptional. The students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and evident in their exchanges with their peers and the adults they encounter in college.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils’ attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils’ behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils’ attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

The very good working relationships established between staff and students build confidence. As a consequence, students have very positive attitudes to learning. The common features that contribute to good and sometimes exceptional learning are underpinned by teachers’ high expectations and detailed planning to take account of the students’ individual learning needs. In the best lessons, pace and challenge are well matched to students’ abilities and the range of activities ensure that they make rapid progress.

The high proportion of good teaching observed by inspectors consistently exhibits strong subject knowledge, imaginative use of resources and new technology and a strong focus on independent learning. The college has good systems to check students’ progress over time. Teachers’ use of assessment to enhance learning is good. Work is marked regularly and the best practice provides clear, formative comment that helps students make further progress.

The curriculum has breadth and balance with a good balance of academic and vocational courses. However, the curriculum in English and mathematics has not, over time, proved sufficiently strong to secure good student progress. Improvement was evident in the 2011 English results but was more variable in mathematics. The personalisation of learning has proved effective in raising standards.

Students have a very positive view of the care, guidance and support provided. As one Year 11 student explained to an inspector: ‘I could never have spoken to you like this – the help they give you at ‘Number 4’ gives you confidence.’ Strong multi-agency work has significantly reduced the risk of exclusion, and students with a history of disengagement have been successfully reintegrated into examination courses.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior team have embedded ambition and driven improvement particularly well since the last inspection. Leadership has strength at all levels because of the pastoral and academic school structure. As a result, the potential difficulties of managing a

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split-site where the two buildings are significantly distant have become an asset to student confidence and the professional development of staff. Almost all of the staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire stated they felt proud to be a member of staff at the college. Community cohesion is outstanding at all levels, with the college having a huge presence in the community it serves in many diverse ways, and provision has a strong national and international dimension.

Senior staff accompanied inspectors in the joint observation of teaching; the views they expressed consistently concurred with the judgements given by inspectors. Equality of opportunity is good and being enhanced by the new initiatives to guide the more vulnerable students. Governance is good, with a clear focus on enhancing provision at every level with an accurate view of the college’s strengths and areas for development. The school’s safeguarding procedures are good with a focus on practical applications, such as the use of CCTV on the school buses, which are well received by students. Engagement with parents and carers is good and at the heart of the improvements secured in attendance.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

Students make good progress with many exceeding challenging targets in 2011. As an open sixth form, retention rates are good and attendance is above average. Students take responsibility for monitoring their own progress against personal targets and collaborate well in helping each other to achieve. Teaching is good and the use of assessment is rigorous; students comment positively about prompt marking and feedback that helps them make good progress. They speak highly of the academic support and guidance they receive, and the willingness of their teachers to provide support at an individual level. The curriculum is flexible and

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enables students to follow the most appropriate pathway for them.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good as a result of the recent strengthening of the sixth form team. The action taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning has had a positive impact on improving standards. The new sixth form centre is utilised well, providing students with a sense of identity and a high quality environment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |
| Taking into account: | 2 |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The views of the significant numbers of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. A few took the time to write in detail or telephone the inspection team with the detail of individual concerns they had. Inspectors were impressed by the detailed case notes the college had available to make clear the efforts that had been made for each student.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tendring Technology College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 336 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1966 students registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 144 | 43 | 181 | 54 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 149 | 44 | 172 | 51 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 124 | 37 | 183 | 54 | 17 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 131 | 39 | 174 | 52 | 16 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 148 | 44 | 174 | 52 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 109 | 32 | 189 | 56 | 23 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 70 | 21 | 207 | 62 | 36 | 11 | 4 | 1 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 131 | 39 | 177 | 53 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 132 | 39 | 169 | 50 | 16 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 150 | 45 | 145 | 43 | 21 | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 87 | 26 | 186 | 55 | 24 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 166 | 49 | 154 | 46 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 172 | 51 | 143 | 42 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 1 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Tendring Technology College, Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 0AZ

I had the opportunity to visit the college 10 years ago and it was a real pleasure to return and lead the recent inspection. The inspection team were impressed by the good progress you make, by the effective teaching available and the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Standards are rising, particularly in the sixth form and levels of attendance are improving. The curriculum is good and new developments, such as 'Number 4' and the Year 7 transition group, are important to those who feel vulnerable. The college continues to grow and the new sixth form buildings are a real bonus.

I have asked the principal to continue to raise standards in English and mathematics by focusing on subject-specific literacy and ensuring that the strong teaching available in the sixth form is developed at GCSE. The personalisation of the curriculum on offer is good but it could be extended to help raise standards further. You can play your part by ensuring your attendance is as high as possible.

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

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